

FORM A - AREA

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Photograph

(3" x 3" or 3- 1/2" x 5", black and white only)

Label photos on black with town and addresses for all buildings shown. Record film roll and negative numbers here on the form. Staple 1-2 photos to left side of form over this space. Attach additional photos to continuation sheets.

roll negative(s)

1	16-20
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Sketch Map

Draw a map of the area indicating properties within it. Circle and number properties for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets including route numbers, if any. Attach a continuation sheet if space is not sufficient here. Indicate north.

SEE ATTACHED MAP

Town Cove

Name of Area Moulton's Cabins
(now Starfish Condominiums)
50 – 80 Hay Road

Present Use Cabin Colony

Construction Dates or Period 1930 - 1939

Overall Condition good

Major Intrusions and Alterations none

Acreage 4.1 acres

Recorded by Kathryn Grover & Neil Larson
Larson Fisher Associates
P.O. Box 1394
Woodstock NY 12498

Organization Eastham Historical Commission

Date (month/year) August 2005

Assessor's Sheets USGS Quad Area Letter Form Numbers in Area

18-297A-P	ORLEANS	L	217 - 233
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Town EASTHAM

Place (neighborhood or village)

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
EASTHAM

Property Address
MOULTON'S CABINS
(50-80 HAY ROAD)

Area(s) Form No.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

L	216 - 233
---	-----------

Page 1

AREA FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION ☐ *see continuation sheet*

Describe architectural, structural and landscape features and evaluate in terms of other areas within the community

The Moulton Cabins complex is located on the north side of Hay Road and the west side of the State Highway (U.S. Route 6) south of the center of Eastham. The historic town center known as Town Cove is located on the east side of the State Highway, while the present town center is about a mile north. The polygonal 4.1-acre parcel was part of a 7.9-acre owned by Reginald B. and Bernice Moulton, who built the cabin colony between 1930 and 1939. The area was reduced to its present configuration in 1975.

There are 16 cabins arranged in two arcing tiers in a large lawn west of the highway. Two unpaved vehicle paths enter the colony from the State Highway and traverse the property to a point where they join and exit on to Brenda Lane, which forms the western boundary of the property. Each cabin is accessible by automobile across the lawn; parking areas are delineated by wood curbs. Shade trees are scattered throughout the colony providing a park-like setting.

The focal point at the State Highway entrance is a 2-story, Dutch Colonial Revival-style house built by Reginald B. Moulton in 1930. It remains intact with its original wood shingle siding, six-over-one windows, one-story sun room extension and distinctive "stoop" with Colonial Revival details and side benches. This was where the builder/operator lived with his family. The two-stall, hipped-roof garage in the rear of the house is also intact, and it functions as the office and maintenance center for the colony.

Moulton built a total of 14 cabins in two arching tiers behind the house. Construction of these began in 1930 and likely extended beyond 1939, as the Moultons acquired additional property for expansion. He also constructed a shower house, which had been converted into a cabin unit by 1989 (Cottage #14). The cabins were built in three plans, which probably reflected different building campaigns. All were built with wood frames with a combination of wood clapboard and wood shingle sidings. Some cabins had clapboards on their front facades and shingles on their sides while others had the reverse providing some variety in the otherwise standard appearances. Cabins numbered 1 – 4 and 9 – 11 are the largest with rectangular plan containing a living room/kitchen area in the front, two bed rooms in the rear and a small bathroom on the kitchen end. There was also a porch on the gable end, which has since been enclosed in all the examples.

Cabins numbered 5 – 8 have smaller plans within two separate gable roof sections. These cabins contain only one bed room along with the standard living room/kitchen space and bathroom. The third plan group, cabins numbered 12 – 15, have rectangular plans with one bedroom. These appear to be the most recent type built and include the shower house conversion dated c. 1987. All the cabins have outdoor showers connected to interior bathroom spaces for water supply.

Because of deed restrictions governing maintenance and alterations and forbidding additions, the cabins have remained essentially intact even though they are now individually owned as condominiums. Their small size,

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEETTown
EASTHAMProperty Address
MOULTON'S CABINS
(50-80 HAY ROAD)

Area(s) Form No.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

L 216 - 233

Page 2

economical construction and modest design are characteristic of their pre-WWII context. Their preservation is unusual in the town and they remain as one of the very few intact colonies in Eastham and the outer Cape.

MHC Number	Cabin No. (Hay Rd.)	Description	Const. Date	Property Type	Status
217	1 (50)	1 story, wood frame cottage, gable roof; 3 bay front façade, center entrance; 1-story porch on end (enclosed); wood clapboard & wood shingle siding, asphalt shingle roof	1930	building	contributing
218	2 (52)	1 story, wood frame cottage, gable roof; 3 bay front façade, center entrance; 1-story porch on end (enclosed); wood clapboard & wood shingle siding, asphalt shingle roof	1930	building	contributing
219	3 (54)	1 story, wood frame cottage, gable roof; 3 bay front façade, center entrance; 1-story porch on end (enclosed); wood clapboard & wood shingle siding, asphalt shingle roof	1930	building	contributing
220	4 (56)	1 story, wood frame cottage, gable roof; 3 bay front façade, center entrance; 1-story porch on end (enclosed); wood clapboard & wood shingle siding, asphalt shingle roof	1930	building	contributing
221	5 (58)	1 story, wood frame cottage, 2 sections w/gable roofs, wood clapboard and wood shingle siding, asphalt shingle roof	1930-1939	building	contributing
222	6 (60)	1 story, wood frame cottage, 2 sections w/gable roofs, wood clapboard and wood shingle siding, asphalt shingle roof	1930-1939	building	contributing
MHC Number	Cabin No. (Hay Rd.)	Description	Const. Date	Property Type	Status
223	7 (62)	1 story, wood frame cottage, 2 sections w/gable roofs, wood clapboard and wood shingle siding, asphalt shingle roof	1930-1939	building	contributing
224	8 (64)	1 story, wood frame cottage, 2 sections w/gable roofs, wood clapboard and wood shingle siding, asphalt shingle roof	1930-1939	building	contributing
225	9 (66)	1 story, wood frame cottage, gable roof; 3 bay front façade, center entrance; 1-story porch on end (enclosed); wood clapboard & wood shingle siding, asphalt shingle roof	1930-1939	building	contributing
226	10 (68)	1 story, wood frame cottage, gable roof; 3 bay front façade, center entrance; 1-story porch on end (enclosed); wood clapboard & wood shingle	1930-1939	building	contributing

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEETTown
EASTHAMProperty Address
MOULTON'S CABINS
(50-80 HAY ROAD)

Area(s) Form No.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

L 216 - 233

Page 3

		siding, asphalt shingle roof			
227	11 (70)	1 story, wood frame cottage, gable roof; 3 bay front façade, center entrance; 1-story porch on end (enclosed); wood clapboard & wood shingle siding, asphalt shingle roof	1930-1939	building	contributing
228	12 (72)	1 story, wood frame cottage, gable roof; 3 bay front façade, center entrance; deck on front; wood clapboard and wood shingle siding, asphalt shingle roof	1930-1939	building	contributing
229	13 (74)	1 story, wood frame cottage, gable roof; 3 bay front façade, center entrance; deck on front; wood clapboard and wood shingle siding, asphalt shingle roof	1930-1939	building	contributing
230	14 (76)	1 story, wood frame cottage, gable roof; 3 bay front façade, center entrance; deck on front; wood clapboard and wood shingle siding, asphalt shingle roof . Formerly the shower house.	1930-1939, c.1985	building	contributing
231	15 (78)	1 story, wood frame cottage, 2 sections w/gable roofs, wood clapboard and wood shingle siding, asphalt shingle roof	1930-1939	building	contributing
MHC Number	Cabin No. (Hay Rd.)	Description	Const. Date	Property Type	Status
232	16 (80)	2 story, wood frame, Dutch Colonial Revival dwelling; false gambrel roof; 3 bay front façade, central entrance w/ gable roof porch; 3-bay shed roof dormer on front and rear; 1-story sun room on south end; wood shingle siding, asphalt shingle roof	1930	Building	contributing
233	Garage/ Office	1 story, wood frame, hipped roof; 2 vehicle stalls w/ OHD; office entrance on west side; wood shingle siding, asphalt shingle roof	1930	outbldg	contributing

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE ☐ *see continuation sheet*

Explain historical development of the area. Discuss how this relates to the historical development of the community.

At least eleven of the fifteen cottages and the house in Dutch Colonial Revival style, all now known as Starfish Condominiums, were built in 1930 by Reginald B. Moulton Sr., a Vermont native who had come to Eastham

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
EASTHAM

Property Address
MOULTON'S CABINS
(50-80 HAY ROAD)

Area(s) Form No.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

L	216 - 233
---	-----------

Page 4

sometime prior to 1930. The cottage colony, called Moulton's Cabins, was probably Eastham's second; Collins Cottages, just north of the Orleans rotary and on the other, or east, side of the State Highway, had opened just a year earlier. Both Collins Cottages and Moulton's Cabins predate the 1931 Days Cottages at Beach Point in North Truro, which area tourism historian James C. O'Connell has identified as "one of the first Cape cottage colonies."¹

According to his daughter Marjorie Jordan (born 1928), Moulton had come to Cape Cod because he "figured the Cape was a gold mine. He had the foresight to look ahead and see what was going to happen. He saw the Cape was going to boom." Jordan said her father was staying at a rooming or guest house in Orleans when he met his future wife Bernice, a native of Providence, Rhode Island, who was visiting friends.

Reginald B. Moulton is identified in the 1930 census as a house carpenter. According to his son Reginald B. Moulton Jr. (born 1931) and his daughter Marjorie, Moulton designed and built both the house and fourteen of the cottages himself. He also built what is shown as a "shower house" on a 1976 plan, which had been converted to a fifteenth cottage by 1989.² All of these units remain in their original configuration and setting.

Reginald Moulton apparently built his cabin colony on two acres of land his wife had purchased on 24 March 1930. It stood at the intersection of Hay Road, on the south, and, on the east, the State Highway—or U.S. Route 6, which ran through the center of Eastham from Provincetown to Long Beach, California; it was then the longest of the first numbered federal highways. Bernice Moulton purchased the parcel from Nettie F. Knowles (born 1865), the widow of Freeman E. Knowles (born 1861).³ Freeman E. Knowles was the son of Freeman Knowles (born 1822) and nephew of Edmund T. Knowles, whose names also appear in references to the property. The land was part of earlier Freeman Knowles's farm and may well have passed to him from his own father, also Freeman Knowles (born about 1779-died 28 November 1843).⁴

Part of this Knowles farm had passed out of the family in the 1800s, however, and in 1906 Nettie Knowles purchased eight acres (including the two she later sold to Beatrice Moulton) from Francis W. Smith, a

1. Collins Cottage Historic District National Register nomination, 31 January 1999, Massachusetts Historical Commission, Boston; James C. O'Connell, *Becoming Cape Cod: Creating a Seaside Resort* (Hanover, NH, and London: University Press of New England, 2003), 54.

2. Reginald B. Moulton Jr., interview with Kathryn Grover, 17 December 2004; Marjorie Moulton Jordan, interview with Kathryn Grover, 17 December 2004; for these plans, see Barnstable County Registry of Deeds Plan Book 302:9 and 462:20. Plan Book 462:21 also shows the floor plans of all sixteen units, including both floors of the house and its garage.

3. George Cantor, *Where the Old Roads Go: Driving the First Federal Highways of the Northeast* (New York: Harper and Row, 1990), 125; Barnstable County Registry of Deed Book 474:568.

4. Nettie F. Knowles appears in the 1910 and 1930 Eastham census. See the 1850 Eastham census for Edmund T. (born 1820), Freeman (born 1822), and William P. Knowles (1829), who are the sons of Freeman Knowles Sr. (about 1779-28 November 1843). The elder Freeman Knowles married Martha Mayo, who is shown as head of household in 1850. Enumerated in that census between her household of seven and her son Freeman's household of four is that of James Rogers and his wife Hannah; Rogers is also mentioned often in deeds as an abutter to what became Starfish Condominiums. On Freeman Knowles (1779-28), see also Simeon L. Deyo, *History of Barnstable County, Massachusetts, 1620-1890* (New York: H. W. Blake, 1890), 741.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
EASTHAM

Property Address
MOULTON'S CABINS
(50-80 HAY ROAD)

Area(s) Form No.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

L	216 - 233
---	-----------

Page 5

fisherman and farmer from a longtime Eastham family.⁵ Smith himself had purchased it only a year earlier from Alexander Newcomb of Orleans, a county commissioner who had been assigned the mortgage on the property after the default of Luther Lewis and his wife Amanda H. Lewis.⁶ The Lewises owned the land from the late 1870s, but they probably lived on it from at least as early as 1858, when "L. Lewis" is shown on the approximate site on the 1858 Henry F. Walling *Atlas of the Counties of Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket, Massachusetts*. Luther Lewis is listed in the 1850 Eastham census as an eighteen-year-old seaman, born in Boston and then living in the home of shipmaster Jonathan Snow, an Orleans native; in 1858 Snow lived on the east side of the State Highway and further north of the cottages.

The intersection of Hay Road and what is now Route 6 was just west of Town Cove, part of what is now called the Nauset Marsh "coastal embayment," and in the early to mid-1800s it appears to have been a favorite place for mariners to settle.⁷ Like Luther Lewis and Jonathan Snow, Freeman, Edmund T., and William P. Knowles were all listed as seamen (or at sea; the census listing under occupation simply states "sea") in 1850. In the same neighborhood in 1860, William Wareham was listed as a mariner, and Ezekiel Doane (shown across King's Highway and north of Luther Lewis on the 1858 Walling map) was listed as a farmer, though he spent from roughly 1824 to 1851 at sea.⁸ By 1860, Freeman Knowles and James Rogers were farmers and seemed to have remained so until their deaths. By 1860 Luther Lewis had married, had two children, and was working as a merchant.

By 1880, however, Lewis was no longer a merchant but a fisherman. Two years earlier, on 20 April 1878, Edmund T. Knowles sold to Lewis's wife Almira the lot of land called "little beach" for fifty dollars.⁹ It was bounded on the east by what was then the County Road, now Route 6. Hay Road did not then exist at the south; there and on the west was the so-called "Great Beach lot," extending apparently to Cape Cod Bay. Along the northern boundary were the lands of James Rogers and Freeman Knowles, the father of Freeman E. Knowles and Edmund's brother. The Freeman Knowles farm was on both sides of the State Highway, according to his will and several deeds.¹⁰

5. Barnstable County Deeds 282:352.

6. Ibid. 276:17.

7. Coastal embayments are "enclosed areas of the coastline where the fresh water from groundwater and streams is mixed with salt water from the surrounding oceans." See Cape Cod Coastal Embayment Project Web site, <http://www.capecodcommission.org/water/overview.htm>.

8. See Alice Lowe, *Nauset on Cape Cod: A History of Eastham* (Eastham, MA: Eastham Historical Society, 1968), 131-32, and the California Genealogy Web site, <http://www.californiagenealogy.org/goldrush/wanted/doane.htm>, which state that Doane went with gold-seekers to California on the brig *Canonicus* in 1849 and returned to Eastham two years later. The Web site adding that he sailed from Boston on 2 April in 1849, arrived in San Francisco on 2 November of that year, and mined with a partner near Stockton. On Wareham's son William, who became a shipmaster, see Lowe, *Nauset on Cape Cod*, 142.

9. Barnstable County Deeds 132:114.

10. See, for example, *ibid.* 535:238, which makes reference to land conveyed by the will of Freeman Knowles to Freeman E. Knowles and his other children and describes parcels on both sides of the highway.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
EASTHAM

Property Address
MOULTON'S CABINS
(50-80 HAY ROAD)

Area(s) Form No.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

L	216 - 233
---	-----------

Page 6

By the late 1890s, however, the Lewises were compelled to take out two mortgages on their eight-acre property,¹¹ one from Arthur F. Peterson of Stoneham, who may have been their son-in-law. In 1905 both of them defaulted, and on 19 August 1905, after advertising in the Yarmouth *Register*, the parcel was sold at public auction to the farmer Francis W. Smith for \$455.¹² Less than five months later Smith sold it to Nettie F. Knowles, thereby returning the land to the Knowles family twenty-eight years after its sale to Luther Lewis.¹³

Nettie Knowles kept the eight-acre parcel intact until she sold two acres at the intersection of the State Highway and Hay Road to Beatrice M. Moulton in 1930. Both of the Moultons' children recall fourteen cottages from their earliest years, and fourteen are known to have existed by 1949.¹⁴ No plan showing the cottages in situ exist in public archives until 1976. This plan shows fifteen cottages, nine of which stand closest to the house in a rough semicircle row. The five one-bedroom cottages in this arc, one only 255 square feet, face Route 6 but are separated from it by a garage (now the complex's office) and the Dutch Colonial Revival house Moulton also built in 1930. Four of the five have an entrance into the kitchen, which may have been a thoughtful nod on Moulton's part to the automobile tourist who wanted to unload groceries quickly. Almost every sign that advertised cabins and cottages in Eastham called them "housekeeping" units.¹⁵ The four two-bedroom cottages in this semicircle, in an arc from southeast to south, originally had screened porches which have since been enclosed.

Five—and, with the converted shower house, now six—cottages are arrayed in a second semicircle in the back of the lot, three of them on the same two-bedroom plan with screened porches. It is at least possible that Moulton did not build these until after 25 February 1939, when he acquired a 4.5-acre parcel adjoining the two-acre lot his wife had purchased in 1930.¹⁶ He acquired this abutting parcel from George D. Knowles, one of the sons of Freeman E. and Nettie F. Knowles, who had himself received it in 1937 by deed from his

11. Barnstable County Deeds 186:250, 226:546. The latter mortgage deed was between the Lewises and Arthur F. Peterson and his wife Elsie S. Peterson, who was probably the Lewis's daughter, born in 1855. In 1897, the date of this latter mortgage, both the Petersons and the Lewises were living in Stoneham.

12. Barnstable County Deeds 276:17.

13. Ibid. 282:352.

14. Assessor's Office, Town of Eastham, has a build date of 1955 for one unit, 1984 for three units, and 1930 for twelve units on this property, including the house, but Barnstable County Deeds 724:573 states that the property, then two parcels, contained "the dwelling, garage, barn, and fourteen cottages."

15. See Collins Cottage Historic District nomination; see also untitled scrapbook of photographs of road signs in Eastham, 1955, Eastham Archives, Eastham Public Library.

16. Moulton's daughter Marjorie Jordan stated that he used salvage lumber from the Chequessett Inn in Wellfleet, which was destroyed after a February 1934 ice storm that undermined the wharf and pilings on which it had been built in 1902. Orleans's Church of the Holy Spirit was built from the inn's remains. If Jordan's recollection is true and if Moulton's Cabins was in business in 1930, some of the cabins must have been built later.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
EASTHAM

Property Address
MOULTON'S CABINS
(50-80 HAY ROAD)

Area(s) Form No.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

L	216 - 233
---	-----------

Page 7

siblings after the decease of his parents.¹⁷

The Moultons ran the cabin colony for nearly twenty years. Reginald Moulton also worked at house and commercial block construction elsewhere around the Cape, particularly in Wellfleet, according to his daughter. Winfred Knowles of Eastham recalled Moulton's carpentry work as well in a 1981 interview. "I worked in Wellfleet a lot, because Reggie Moulton—you know him, or did know him, he's dead now, I guess. And he had some trouble with Miss Freeman down there. She's the only real estate one in Wellfleet in those times. She'd get all the jobs and he'd get all the work, and he got mad at her and quit and I took over. And I built two houses down there and then I had it on the book for two more." At the Eastham cottage colony Reginald Moulton handled all of the carpentry and repair; Beatrice, until her death in 1943, did all of the housekeeping (including ironing all of the sheets) with the assistance of a hired woman and, occasionally, her daughter. Reginald Jr. did the mowing. Though guest registers have not survived, the colony was busy, Jordan recalls: her parents rented not only the cabins but rooms in the house, and during the warm months she and her brother slept in tents to make room for tourists.¹⁸

After Beatrice M. Moulton's death, her husband was compelled to take out several mortgages, and between 1949 and 1952 he and his two children transferred the property to John F. Noons of North Truro. In 1955 Noons sold the property to John and June N. Doyle of Brewster, and it then was subject to a series of confusing transactions, including either John Doyle's death or the couple's divorce. By 1968, the former June N. Doyle, now June N. Smith, granted the former property of the Moultons to herself and her husband Everett E. Smith.¹⁹ Eight years later, the Smiths sold the property to Brenda and Richard Peterson of Oakville, Ontario, Canada, who owned the entire eight-acre tract that had been transferred from Francis W. Smith to Nettie F. Knowles in 1906. The Petersons submitted a plan to the Barnstable County Registry of Deeds in 1976 showing the former Moulton's Cabins, the house, and garage as Lot #7, a 4.1-acre tract, bordering on the west both a 3.8-acre Lot #6 and four partially delineated lots separated from the cottage lot by a "future way," later Brenda Lane.²⁰ In 1980, six years after the Petersons acquired the former cottage colony, they sold it to Hobart D. Van Deusen of Montclair, New Jersey, for \$125,000.²¹

On 25 January 1984 Starfish Realty Trust was established by Paul F. and Denise E. Coughlan of Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, and on the same day Van Deusen sold the 4.1-acre cottage colony and its house and garage to the Coughlans for the price at which he had purchased it in 1980.²² The trust, whose trustees are owners of

17. Barnstable County Deeds 535:238 and 722:347, which refers to the deed between Moulton and Knowles in 1939 but does not cite the deed by book and page.

18. Winfred Knowles, interview with Angela Riedel and Sadie Flint, 9 April 1981, 27-28, Eastham Historical Society Archives, Eastham Public Library; Moulton and Jordan interviews.

19. Barnstable County Deeds 913:360, 940:281, 940:283, 1080:298, 1418:525.

20. Barnstable County Plan Book 302:9.

21. Barnstable County Deeds 3193:300.

22. Ibid. 3998:61 & 70. See also ibid. 4010:95 for an amended version of 3998:70, in which the Petersons corrected several

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
EASTHAM

Property Address
MOULTON'S CABINS
(50-80 HAY ROAD)

Area(s) Form No.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Page 8

L	216 - 233
---	-----------

what were once cabins for rent, still exists.

omissions in their deed to Van Deusen.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
EASTHAM

Property Address
MOULTON'S CABINS
(50-80 HAY ROAD)

Area(s) Form No.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

L	216 - 233
---	-----------

Page 9

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O'Connell, James C. Becoming Cape Cod: Creating a Seaside Resort. Hanover, NH, and London: University Press of New England, 2003.
U.S. Census. Town of Eastham, Barnstable County, Massachusetts.

☒ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form*

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
EASTHAM

Property Address
MOULTON'S CABINS
(50-80 HAY ROAD)

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

L	217 - 233
---	-----------



View of cottages and setting



Main house (#80 Hay Road)

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
EASTHAM

Property Address
MOULTON'S CABINS
(50-80 HAY ROAD)

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

L	217 - 233
---	-----------



Cottage #50 (Partial view of Cottage #52 on left)



Cottage #72

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
EASTHAM

Property Address
MOULTON'S CABINS
(50-80 HAY ROAD)

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

L	217 - 233
---	-----------



Cottage #60

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Community
EASTHAM

Property Address
MOULTON'S CABINS
50 - 80 HAY ROAD

Area(s) Form No.

L	217 - 233
---	-----------

National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- ☐ Individually eligible ☐ Eligible **only** in a historic district
☐ Contributing to a potential historic district ☒ Potential historic district

Criteria: ☒ **A** ☐ **B** ☒ **C** ☐ **D**

Criteria Considerations: ☐ **A** ☐ **B** ☐ **C** ☐ **D** ☐ **E** ☐ **F** ☐ **G**

Statement of Significance by Neil Larson (Larson Fisher Associates, Woodstock NY)
The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

Moulton's Cabins (now known as Starfish Condominiums) are historically and architecturally significant as an intact and distinctive example of the cabin colonies that appeared along the state highway (U.S. 6) in the 1930s as automobile tourism increased dramatically on Cape Cod. One of three or four such colonies still functioning in Eastham (Collins Cottages, north of the Orleans Rotary on Rt. 6 is listed on the National Register), Moulton's Cabins are essentially intact in their scale, form and setting due to deed restrictions established when the property was made a condominium in 1989. Most of the existing cabins were constructed in 1930, just one year after the Collins Cottages and one year before Days Cottages at Point Beach in North Truro, which are considered one of the first cottage colonies on Cape Cod.

Reginald B. and Bernice Moulton met while vacationing in Orleans. He was from Vermont and she was from Providence, Rhode Island. They married and purchased a two-acre parcel on the state highway in Eastham in 1930 where Reginald quickly erected fourteen small cabins and a shower house to capitalize on what he figured was "a gold mine" in the summer tourist trade. Moulton also constructed a 2-story, Dutch Colonial Revival-style house for his family. The two-stall, hipped-roof garage in the rear of the house functioned as the office and maintenance center for the colony.

The cabins were small, one-story, gable roof buildings with wood shingle siding. Their front facades have central entrances in a basic and reduced manner of the traditional Cape Cod house. These early dwellings set the standard for the scores of small cabins that later would be built, either singly or in colonies, throughout the town. Three different plans were employed in the design of the cabins. One was square with the living room pushed out into a small ell; another was rectangular. Both of these cabins contained a living room, one bedroom, a kitchen and bathroom. The third plan type was larger and contained a second bedroom and a porch area. The remarkable preservation of these buildings provides important documentation of the character of tourist housing in the early 20th century. The cabins are sited in two arcing tiers in the midst of a park-like setting with an expansive, tree-studded lawn. Unpaved vehicle paths and parking areas, typical in the town, remain to preserve a sense of the low-impact role of the automobile in site planning.